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RESURRECTION OF THE GODS

DON A. MICKLESON



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BY

DON A. MICKLESON
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BOSTON
THE GORHAM PRESS
MCMXVIII

\$1.00 net

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P63525
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MAY -7 1918

Made in the United States of America

THE GORHAM PRESS, BOSTON, U. S. A.

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A flight of birds of varied form
Perched themselves upon a tree—
No doubt they thought themselves alone
Or they wouldn't have spoken as they did near me.

Paralyzed, dumb and stricken with awe
I stood in my tunnel and gazed at them
For they were birds against nature's law,
Having the voices and words of men.

I'd been delving the earth in search of wealth
Far within a desert land—
The birds came there as if in stealth,
That queer, uncanny, feathered band.

I judged it thus from their actions, sly
And the caution, they had in speaking,
They looked about both low and high—
I thought at first they were sneaking,—

Sneaking about to fill their gizzards
With tempting bait from near the tree—
Squirrels, perhaps, or maybe lizards
Then (evil omen) I feared 'twas me.

For there, in converse with that bevy of fowl,
Blackbird and swan, eagle and crane,
Sat a bird of fate,—a great old owl,—
Wondered I much whence they came.

Now, the fates decree by omens and signs
When ill betides,—to those who are wise

The same today as in olden times
And to know them, is easy, for he who tries.

So beholding there that bird of evil
That mocks at some where 'er they roam,
I concluded that he was sent by the devil
To supervise stripping me flesh from bone.

But, great my relief when at length the crane
Began to speak of their mission's aim
And intently I listened for him to explain,—
Hoping he'd state when they'd leave again.

“Friends,” he murmured, in accents low,
“In form of birds do we assemble here
Lest man may see and learn and know
There lives yet the gods they've ceased to fear.”

“In this guise we must seek one
Whose heart is free to accept the truth
And carry the tidings to every one
Assembled here upon the earth.”

I, standing there with pick and shovel,
Hidden within my hidden tunnel,
Was filled with amazement, fear and fright—
Realizing, at length, that within my sight
Was a legion of gods from a world unknown
From whence, as birds, they must have flown.
Their object, no doubt, to rule the earth
As they ruled it before the Christian birth.

I thought me then of times of yore
When the Christ and gods, as never before,
Sought to save the souls of men
Who prayed for someone to save for them.

Be it Christ or gods or norns or elves,
The souls—they must needs save themselves,
And, concerning which, they'd dream and hope
And yet in darkness of it, grope.

Rudely was my reverie broken
By the words of an eagle, spoken.
His voice, like distant thunder boomed;
My fate, I feared, was sealed and doomed.
Such tremors strange, unseemly, queer
Shook the world,—as I, with fear—
Afrighted I and mutely wondered
Whose his words that thusly thundered?
Who could this in shape of bird be
Whose tones, in truth, were quite unworldly?
At length, condemned I much my blindness,
When noting with what truth and kindness
This god spoke of earth and heaven,
How illy man of the good, then given
Made it serve the end intended
And long ere he, his speech had ended
Knew I that the great Thor spoke—
God of storm and thunder bolt.

“Our great god Odin, permit me to state—
Ye Gods of all from prison freed—
Has wisely spoken of the pitiful state
Of mankind now, and their awful need.”

"The rulers of men need judges for them—
"Tis plain that they have gone astray
From the path intended for them.
Fools! Such fools! Have they wandered away.
Why is it thus? Why thus, ye gods?
What cause brings such calamity?
Canst comprehend, ye gods
Why thus such fools,—humanity?"

"Since driven from earth by fate's decree
And losing all power o'er the fates of men
Tis a sad return, as viewed by we,
To behold the tardy progression of men.
Truly doth it appear as when
Hermod, in hell, our Balder found
When men and gods and mountains and plain
Wept with grief and shook with fright—
When tears were shed like ceaseless rain
At losing him, the god of light."

"For behold! Where is the joy today?
"Tis dead, I ween, all dead from strife;
Mirth is sung in a mirthless lay,
Men do not live,—they have but life."

"In place of we gods, hath a great divinity
Worshipped by all mankind for ages—
Ruled the world as did Odin, Vile and Ve;
That trinity of gods, first known to sages."

"And whence there sprang this queer religion
Devoid of beauty, with greed its fetish

That's made men slaves legion by legion
Since fate, from earth, we gods did banish."

"But mine eye of prophetic vision
Beholds a dawn upon the earth—
A dawn that's held by men in derision
Being taught it folly, (since the Christian birth).

"All hail the day when once again
The brave and true alone appears
At banquets where we gods shall reign
And drink from goblets of Freyja's tears."

"'Tis indeed as 'twas before
We from earth were banished
Some are glutted with their store
While some are truly famished."

"'Tis strange indeed that we should find,
After ages of that fatal sway
That severed communion, with us, mankind,
To find the evils the same today."

"But such is fate, by fate's decree
This Christian rule is doomed,
We gods again shall truly be
By mankind with victory plumed."

"Beauty once again shall rule,
Freyja will be honored.
All again, to we gods shall pray
The wise, as the untutored."

So spoke Thor, the god of thunder,
Listed I, with awe and wonder,
Hearing thus, an eagle speak
In truth to me seemed such a freak,

That I questioned if my reason
Had not indeed committed treason
And left me there an empty shell
Like a vagabond escaped from hell,

Devoid of means of knowing truly
Had my mind become unruly,
Yet I knew they spoke like sages
If perchance through all the ages,

As there, before me, they did confess,
The fates afforded them redress
From a bondage that grieved them sorely
In narrow realms devoid of glory,

Whence again, they might, their valor try
And win allegiance for aye and aye
From man, who once served them well—
Till, vainglorious—they sipped of hell,

From arrogance quite unbearable
Thinking they as gods unconquerable.
Their punishment was most justly given
By the fates ruling earth and heaven.



I was a-weary after a day of toil
Yet hoped that, with silence, I might not spoil
The novel experience of hearing birds speak,—
Each of a kind,—with a different beak.

Tho I feared I was crazy and dreaming for sure
"Twas quite beyond me to pass by such a lure,
So silently discarding my shovel and pick
Laying them down without the least click,

I attempted to seat myself on a barrow
(The one I used in working my burrow)
Tho huge in form, with a monstrous frame
I'd sat on my barrow again and again

And always it bore my weight without murmur,
"Twas firm as a rock and I thought a bit firmer,
All made of steel, both hard and tough
And meant to withstand hard usage and rough.

But nevertheless tho I sat down with ease
It smashed with a crash, a moan and a wheeze.
For a moment, in anger, I hotly cursed
When, in flocked the birds, the great owl first.

Now, thought I, they'll devour me alive
Like hornets feasting at a honeybee hive—
For a moment they stood as if undecided,
I, in terror, their onslaught bided.

However, soon, in marched a swan
Her plumage shining as silvery dawn

With queenly tread she made approach
And with tender voice most sweetly spoke,—

Freyja

“Fear not, sir mortal. Why should’st thou
shudder?
Why tremble thus? Why for thy reason fear?
Know ye not the gods commit no murder,
And without good reason cause not a tear?

Think ye then we knew not of your presence,
Tho. with caution, thou attemptedst to attain
Wisdom, with which to win worldly prominence
From the words of gods unknown to them—O
shame!

A shame in truth, that thou should’st give
So little credence to the powers of divinities
And think that so near their presence thou
coulds’t live
Except ’twere considered by them an expediency.

Sir, thou hast heard our conversation,
As ’twas willed by we you should
For ’tis necessary, we in consultation,
(For sake of mankind’s good)

A Mortal being devoid of prejudice
Find, to act as earthly herald
And disseminate, without cowardice,
To all who dwell upon this world

Those tidings which must needs concern
Every dweller upon the earth,
Those tidings anent the gods' return
Their resurrection,—their second birth.

I, dear sir, am Freyja—goddess next to none
Goddess I, of love and every brilliant passion
And, as the worlds are lighted by the rays of the
sun,
I, the hearts of men enlighten,—in like fashion.”

Freyja for a moment, inquisitively, me regarded
I tried in vain to answer her,—fright my speech
retarded
Until at length sweet Freyja, found for me com-
passion
And changed herself into a nymph to arouse me
to some passion.

Her wiles succeeded beyond her hopes, of that I'm
sure truly,
My tongue at once unloosed itself and became,
indeed, unruly.
I met her gaze with candor and scanned her face
of beauty;
“Of all the treasures upon earth,—I'd give quite
free of duty,

For just one kiss, one love embrace—just a
moment's rapture
Give all freely, my soul included, if in my arms
could capture

Such entrancing winning grace, such glorious
loveliness
"Twould make my heart be quite content and
extradite all loneliness."

Such words I spoke and more, quite aflame with
ardor
Until visions of possession, my heart began to
harbor.
And reaching then to clasp the lovely, lovely
vision
I clasped alone thin, thin air and met Freyja's
mild derision.

And instead of a nymph of entrancing form
Stood Freyja now in garb of swan
Tho such creature is to love repellent
Her eyes, with humor, gleamed so excellent

That chagrin and anger, with kind good grace
Took speedy flight from my flushed face
While humor, blessed mood contagious,
Contracted I, from that of Freyja's.

Then kindly did she me reproach
For the audacity to thus approach
A being quite too divine
To be embraced by person, mean as mine.

"Forgive me Freyja," with her I pleaded
"But surely thou must truly know

Results of deeds are all unheeded
At times, by mortals here below.

When love is aroused by beauty divine—
Pray tell me, Freyja, it is no sin
That man may hope to all entwine
Such beauty rare, his arms within.

Truly then 'twere little wonder
That man with woman's wont to blunder
When Freyja, love's most charming goddess
Such wiles entrancing does countenance.”

The Pheasant

“In thine ignorance, do not chide
Thou foolish mortal, lest ill betide.”
Spoke a bird with brilliance vested
While with wing outstretched it gestured
Its voice with anger fraught.

“Know ye not the norns of evil
Require of each and every mortal
A payment in tears or anguish of soul
For the greatest joys from young and old?
And all that's good is dearly bought.”

Mortal

“Thy words indeed cannot be doubted
And often here I hear them quoted
Yet the reason,—would I fain

That thou, a god, to me explain.
Why is that that's best for mortal
Subject is and unto evil
Must a tribute to it pay?"

The Pheasant

"That that's best for mortal creature
Is to him a perfect stranger
Naught he knows, the laws concerning,
Subject he to vulgar yearning,
Reason is to him unknown
Harmony's laws and they alone
Protect all things from evil's sway."

I think that Freyja was inclined
To think this god with superior mind
Would cause that I, myself, entangle
With problems that must end in wrangle
And so to stop the useless speaking
Explained,—"The truth of my seeking
Were better made known another day."

So powerful in its sweetness
Was the voice with which she spoke
E'en the gods showed some meekness
And as if in slavery's yoke
In unison bowed they, each and all
Those birds—yet, gods, both great and small
And with eagerness awaited what Freyja had to
say.

She then outlined to me the plan
By which, unto my fellowman
I'd prove myself of service great
In making known the rules of fate.
"For," said she, " 'Tis meet that man
Learn to live his earthly span
According as the stars may say.

And he who grieves o'er tasks undone or heeds
To murmur o'er his or others good or evil deeds
Must pay the price of being left
In a darkened world,—of light bereft
Until the time so lost in fruitlessness
Is doubly spent in grieving penitence
At the night, now his, which should be day.

And this in part is our earthly mission,—
Each god or goddess controls one passion
And thus shall we attempt to teach
That man may love us, all and each.
Tho, loving one more than all the rest,
Shall he by that one be most blest
No prayer of his be answered—nay."

Mortal

Ah! then Freyja—goddess of the passion supreme
Tell me: wilt thou, when once more you reign,
Inspire the hearts of women with that love divine
That in days of yore—, as if drunk with wine—
The hearts of kings and noblest lords
Thrilled with joy when at their boards

Lovely women smiled their pleasure
And asking aught in slightest measure
Were granted all their hearts desire
E'en tho' their lord must brave hell-fire?

Wilt thou, Freyja, beauteous soul divine
Lend thine aid, lest hearts repine
And die loveless for lack of nurture
And kindly aid from thou, the teacher.
Doubt I not your power, for, had it been less
How, throughout all the centuries
Could'st thine teachings be remembered?
For even today rare love is rendered.

Yet I fear me 'tis on the wane
For lover oft is called insane
By women, who their suit disdain
Unless perchance by right they claim
That which gilds all hearts today
And brands e'en brutes as of superior clay.
Riches, Freyja, or likewise their dearth
Hath near replaced thy power on earth
Or submerged it in a depth of sin
To satisfy vainglorious whim."

Freyja

Sir, I thank thee. But a mortal
Thy kind words I shall heed.
In truth, my heart, as tho' 'twere mortal
In anguish does most truly bleed
To know that that most priceless treasure

Bequeathed by me to lovely woman
Is now replaced by meaner pleasure
And does not mold their hearts, or govern.
Tell me more of thy knowledge, pray.
What the cause? Why this decline?—
Riches, thou sayest, doth replace today
Passionate love—divinest of all things divine?

Mortal

Freyja, thy pardon do I humbly seek,
But ere I can with ardor speak
I pray thee, change thy unseemly garb.
In truth I find the task too hard
Trying thus my speech upon
That which seems to me a swan.
Truly, Freyja, thou dost not fear
To me, in human form appear?
And then, indeed thou would'st embolden
Me, perchance to words quite golden.
Words, I trust, might cheer and charm thee
And, knowest thou, I could not harm thee.
There's a vision now within my mind
Concerning the beauty that must be thine
And could I, Freyja, a moment view it,
Tho death reward me I should not rue it.

Freyja

“Thou, a gallant art in truth
But list thee sir, lend thine ear,
'Twould ill become one of thy youth

To suffer the curse thou now shalt hear.—
In ages gone, when last I reigned,
A mortal, who, with me in converse,
Who, my counsel quite disdained,
Bade me appear and pronounce my curse,
A curse more terrible, he found to bear
Than the curse upon the wandering Jew
A curse, dear sir, that you should fear
As the worst the fates could proffer you.

* * * *

The Curse

“He who looks on Freyja’s form
In torment on this earth shall dwell
For aye and aye shall that one mourn
As does a soul that’s lost in hell.
For ages and ages shall he roam the earth
Seeking for that that’s not for him,—
Seeking from those of noble birth
And from those that are born in sin
A kindly word from a woman kind,
A glance, with love, for himself alone.
Finding it not, ’twill torment his mind,
Thus accursed shall he roam and roam.”

Mortal

“Tho disciple am I of Freyja’s
My heart is not enough courageous
Thy curse to attempt enduring

How-so-e'er its cause be so alluring
For a life of shortest term
Knows how anguish,—the heart can burn,
Knows the heart to ashes turns
When unslaked it yearns and yearns—
Yearns for that it can't attain
As does for freedom—he in chain
And since thy face I cannot gaze upon
Except as nymph or in form of swan
My words, I fear me, may seem cold
For I may speak, not of love, but gold.
Gold it is O Freyja, goddess thou of love,
Gold replaces all things—even the gods above.
Gold will melt the hearts of misses
For gold, the youth, old woman kisses.
Naught else on earth could make them do it
Tho' know they well for life they'll rue it.”

The Eagle

“Hearest thou, ye gods, what says this earthly
man?
Does not his words demand that we more hastily
plan?”

The Raven

“Aye! with this, his confirmation. Let us dis-
cover more—
Whence this abomination that makes our heart
so grievous sore.”

The Pheasant

“E’en the Christ, a greater god than we,
Hath proven the futility
Of battle against that sorcerer—
That scourging, unscrupulous monster—
Who, with satan and all his devils
For amusement in their revels—
Play with the meaner passions of men
And gleefully applaud as they subject them
To sacrifice on mammon’s throne
That, by right, we gods should own.”

Freyja

“What wilt thou then—
Shall not we now disperse,
Explore at once the lives of men
And show this mortal the universe?”

The Eagle

“Freyja thou hast spoken well—
Each god unto his labor go
Hasten the time when man shall dwell
And commune with gods as of long ago.”

Freyja

“Mortal,” spoke sweet Freyja, with her golden
ringing voice
“Desirest thou to visit, and with other gods con-
verse,

Seekest thou that knowledge granted no other
man,
Would'st thou see the homes of gods, and Pluto's
shores scan?

Mortal

"If thou wilt aid me, the swift Pegasus to ride
And with me, in thy splendor, to realms unknown
be guide
Whilst thus thy realms, engaged surveying—
I pledge myself quite all obeying.

Follow thee I will for ages,
Trusting thus to meet the sages
Who, their knowledge, did disperse
So scant throughout the universe.
And gain, from souls whose eyes have scanned
The worlds of gods as the world of man
Some gleam of light
To pierce the night
So all enveloping
Man—just developing."

Freyja

"Come! Mount ye then Pegasus,
Steed of quaintest fancy
On him sail the universe
And behold the sights entrancing.
But ere that steed thou mayest mount
Your soul from body must depart.

No dross as it may soar aloft
To realms wherein it hath no part."

Mortal

"Freyja, Let me then away
A soul on earth today
Does but the body hamper
And to it is a damper
Quenching all the fires
Of mortal's mean desires,
The which must burn on earth
Or prove the victim since his birth
Unfitted for the strife
Through all his life
To win the laurels oft bequeathed
To those of meaner worth."

The Flight to Nether World

Quite then, on the instant
My soul was wafted high.
(Surely it was pleasant
Thus for one to die.)
Through such a space we journeyed,
Quite beyond a mortal's conception—
And when at last it was ended
Met we a strange reception.
We stood on a world of chaos—
Beside us, he who ruled.
A feast was spread before us
Which was, to me, unschooled,

A strange o'er-solid substance
For gods and mortal spirits,
Requiring for their sustenance
Naught that a mortal merits—

For there before us were savory meats
Of various earthly creatures
But high above were placed our seats
The food quite beyond our reaching.
The god of chaos made a fire
While we a seat, each mounted.
He stacked the food up high—yet higher
And with spices did anoint it.
Beneath the meat and bread and wine
He placed a furnace, blazing—
The odors were so rare, so fine
And to my soul so bracing
That, then I comprehended
Why the gods did all require
Their food with spices blended
And sent to them by fire.

Chaos

“Our mission now to the human race
Is to teach to them the glories that may be theirs.
We gods once dwelt upon the world’s face
And one achieved his godship there.
Seek ye into history. The record still is found.
I speak of he called Agamemnon, whose valor none
may doubt,

His bones, with greatest care, were covered in a
mound
In the land called ‘Mycenae,’ where e’en now
they are found out.

Know ye well the ills of men
And the miseries that are theirs
How love supreme’s unknown to them
And they’re weighted down with care.

Their minds so sordid, do but dwell
On things that do their souls ensnare
For even the imps who dwell in hell
For such sordid things do never care.

Thy teachers teach unto all mankind
Of ways to peace that are brutal
For to the paths of peace, all are blind
And their teachings foolish and futile.
For do not they, with words of praise
Bless the poor and wretched
Telling them of the future days
When, by God, they’ll be protected?
They tell them of the gold in store
And the palaces built for them
But forget to tell that nevermore
Will they require either bread or gem.
The while they line their clothes with silk
And drink of the best of wine—
The most of their wealth from the poor filch
Yet call themselves divine.”

Mortal

“Surely Chaos, if that’s thy name,
A god, as thou, must surely know
I’m seeking not such preachments lame
But long for greater things to know.”

So I spoke, my temper rising,
’Twas quite beyond all my surmising
That a god, could thus indulge
Such vagrant news—no greater wit divulge.

“We mortals know, and have for ages
That what you say is true,
But seek I now to learn of sages
And gods of wisdom, as are you—
Whence we came—I’d solve the question
Concerning man and all creatures’ birth.
If made by God in all perfection
And sent by Him to rule the earth,
Did men to depths so low, so mean
Fall from their exalted place
That all semblance of Godly mien
Was eradicated from their face?
Was it thus?—Do not facts reveal
That man arose from bestial haunts
And through ages of woe and weal
Achieve that face he flouts
Proclaiming it the work of God?
Truly then ’twere tedious, slow
And, to me, the process odd
That one so mighty should such pace, go.”

Chaos

"That thou seekest thou canst not know
Until allegiance dost thou sever
With that earth so far below
Tho thou seekest ever and ever."

Freyja

"Hark thee, Chaos, ('tis a mission)
The gods assembled have ordained
That this mortal gain admission
To our realms and thus explain
To fellow-creatures on the earth
Why the gods of ancient lore
Were at time of the great Christ's birth
Condemned by man forevermore."

Chaos

" 'Tis well, perhaps then, with discretion,
That thou viewest for a time
The beginning, yet not the completion
Of the works so called divine."
Saying which; from Freyja, we parted
While I, by Chaos, was escorted
To a point from whence could we view the passing
Of myriads of sparks and meteors flashing
And fragments of earth and iron and stone
From which was Chaos building a home.
By a force of attraction I could not comprehend
When reaching a point did the fragments descend

And attach themselves like clusters of bees
Swarming the air and alighting on trees—
Attach themselves near where we stood
I, a-watching in panic mood.
For here was a mountain growing higher and
higher

Being builded of earth and iron and fire
Which quaked and hissed and seethed and roared
And moaned and groaned as 'twere hell's horde.
From whence we viewed a lake of slime

Of which he'd mentioned at a prior time,
And therein writhed a monster shape
Neither fish, mammal, bird or snake
But a writhing mass of minutest creatures
Devoid of form or head or features.

A mass that struggled and writhed and swarmed
Struggled against cold or being too warm
While some,—cementing with slime and scum
Was the nucleus of skin, for the mass begun.

Each chilly breath or warmer blast
Kept changing a part of the slimy mass
Until,—by Chaos was I informed—
A skin about the whole was formed
And then the battle ensued inside
Those creatures next the monster's hide
Adhered to it and furnished

That by which it could be nourished.
Thus the skin was kept alive
And just within it did there thrive
Another casing that must needs
Upon its fellows—inward—feed.
So the mass at last compact

Became a monster in name and fact.
At first would just an opening be
Nor head, nor eye, nor limb have he
And feed itself on slime and moss
Until with one it met with loss.
Thence other means must Chaos supply—
Whereby the monster may not die—
Mayhap an eye or something akin
A sensitive spot upon the skin—
And so on thus develop for ages
Wiser growing at successive stages.
Small or great, they grow indeed
As best befits their every need.”

* * * *

Now that I knew whence the creation of brutes
Sought I to learn beyond all disputes
If the source could be the same
For the immortal spirits of men.
So I insisted that Chaos should tell me
And tho he frowned at me most severely
At last condescended to me, to explain
How first did man a spirit attain.

Chaos

“When men were but brutes and could not con-
verse
Naught of the spirit controlling the universe
Possessed he then more than apes do today
For know ye,—two forces are extant alway.

One is creative and by man called good
The other destructive and for evil has stood.
Contend they each against the other
At times one wins, at times the other.

And when the first ape man, spoke his first word
He called the good force and the good force heard.
He partook in that instant of the force creative—
The first soul was born to the first hairy native.

After ages and ages of soul cultivation
Ages and ages before civilization
A soul was born that outshone the rest
And spoke to a man in the flesh yet dressed,

The man sorely fearful told his tribe—
A council was called to name and decide
What it could be,—this voice from the air
And the council was of men who still wore hair.

And around a fire in a rock hewn cave
In whispers and fearful, with faces grave
Filled with wonder and perplexed full sore
They pondered the question a month or more.

Finally deciding to call the name ‘God,’
The word was simple, their language too, hence
nothing odd.
When still more ages and ages passed by
And more souls lived when their bodies would die

And members returned to speak to a friend
Even yet mankind, could not comprehend
Whence the origin of the ethereal spirits
And called them all gods regardless of merits.

But some of those spirits with strength to return
Came back to the earth because they did yearn
To win themselves glory or some sort of praise.
From man they had known in their earthly days.

And only succeeded in confusing their friends
By odd demonstrations that none dared condemn.
For only those souls that are great and yet meek
Possess that power by which they may speak.

And of this latter class who progress and progress
(From that source only) no greater, no less,
Have all the gods who are known to men—
From that source only did the gods all ascend.”

Curly then did Chaos refuse
More of his realm or works to disclose.
Little I heeded the refusal, however
For the sights I beheld could appeal to me never.
And anxious was I to return once more
To she who guided the way to the shore
Of the world half built and growing,
For she alone was worth the knowing
Of all immortals thus far met
In guise of bird either white or jet.
Again I mounted old Pegasus,—
Chaos drove two winged rodents—

Away we flew through ethereal vastness
And worlds were passed in moments.
Through space we fled to Urder Font
That place of meeting, high
Where the gods of ancient days were wont
Their laws to make and ply.
While traveling thence, we rested
At a place called, "Mimers Plain."
And for a moment was I invested
With the eyes of immortal and
O, wondrous sights beheld I,
With fearful apprehension
Ghostly figures passing by
Their numbers past comprehension.
In the distance, I also saw
The home of the gods of the south
United now by solemn vow
With the gods who rule the north.
Chaos gave the pass word and but a moment were
we retarded
In passing o'er "Bi Frost" by G. safely guarded.
At last we reached the banquet hall where Freyja
had gone before us
A place of lavish splendor, where sang an angel
chorus.
The place of tinted glass was made,
The floor a crimson red,
The walls were quite transparent,
Blue, the tint o'erhead
Wherein was mirrored scenes of present and of
past
Changing ever changing, each epoch grandly cast

Beyond all human power to describe by pen or
brush
In nebulous waves, ethereal, the worlds passed
in a rush.
They; the photogravers—concentrated in the sky
Revealed in slightest detail events to the gods on
high.
I, a mortal spirit, gazed thereon in rapture
And beheld the deeds of valorous kings and other
mortal creatures
When passed the stories of gods and of worlds
there depicted
Those doubts to which I had ever been addicted
Departed at once from my doubting soul
When forced to review my own life's scroll.

For before me there, like an earthly "movie film"
I viewed my life in the earthly realm,—
The place wherein I first saw light
And the deeds I'd done throughout my life.

Thereon was traced my every act
And compelled me to face the unhappy fact
That my life had been one full of shame
Yet that which caused me the greater pain

Was the fact that I knew that my hosts knew well
That my visiting place should have been in hell,
And the pictures had proven, as all may perceive,
The uselessness of trying, the gods to deceive.

The deeds of each and their actions all
The vile, the good, the great, the small
Were here, indelibly imprinted forever
On waves ethereal, carried thither—
And by that record, so the judges decide,
Each mortal, by it, impartially tried.

While engaged these scenes reviewing
Chaos returned and inquired if I
Would join in the banquet of welcome
Heralding Freyja's return to the sky.

The feast was truly a strange, strange sort
Arranged upon a lengthy board
Prepared, I learned, by Chaos' consort
A sort of tea for her friendly horde—
Thus to honor upon her visit
That goddess from the earth returned—
Who loved in manner so exquisite
Is, throughout the universe of worlds.
Instead of meats, and fruits of tree and vine
Was the banquet board laden
With ambrosial foods for gods divine
And immortal glorious ladies
Tho scant indeed the quantity
The board with food supplied.
'Twas of that strange quality
That immortal life supplied.
The dishes from gold were cast
The purest ever known,
The table of crystal glass
With diamonds and rubies shone.

The food of daintiest flavor,
Seasoned with rarest spices
Called to each his neighbor's favor
And resembled earthly ices.
A single dish and a single spoon,
A single goblet of nectar
Was given to each—from the king of the moon—
All down the line to Hector.
In joyous mood the gods conversed
And beamed upon some mistress,
While I—myself quite secretly cursed—
My eyes caused the distress;
For brilliant wit there was galore
And sweet the silvery laughter.
But not a face could I see more
Than I could see the laughter.

Chaos tried, indeed, to cheer me
Freyja, too, was kind
But mortal eyes yet were with me
Sightless to forms divine.
Dimly, tho, could I see outlined
The ghostly figures near me
As each one sipped his nectared wine
Loved by them most dearly.

Freyja, now in garb, her own
Her swanly garb discarded
Was quaintly questioned of my home—
With curious eyes was I regarded—
For be it known, all gods were free
But some were loth to leave

The home of their nativity
Lest finding cause to grieve.

Hector, now ordained a god,
(Hero of the Trojan war)
Asked a question most truly odd
And wished to know how far

'Twixt Greece and Crete
Or if 'twere many leagues from Troy
That first did Freyja meet
A mortal whom she'd employ
As dispenser of the tidings
Concerning they, her mates.
At last, loosed from hiding
As decreed by the fates.

And Helen, too—her sins repented,
And for whom great Hector fought;
So charmed the gods that they relented,
Those gods who 'gainst her wrought,
With power great but useless—
And now admitted to their halls
The one time great adulteress
To adorn their board or lead at balls.
She questioned Freyja concerning Greece
And still was worldly vain
She wished to know concerning feasts
And if fashions were yet the same?

The feast at length was ended—
The last allowed to me—

Because such food with souls so blended
That three, made a divinity.
So, at least, I was by Freyja told
While our journey we continued,
She now garbed as an eagle bold
I, upon Pegasus pinioned.

We soared now to Jotenheim
And viewed in giant land
The giants:—rude as in olden times
An uncouth monster band.

A moment sufficed for inspection
Of a race of unlettered creatures
Devoid of all godly perfection
Weirdly strange in all their features.
Their homes were still within great caves,
Unshapely were their garments;
Their food, they ate, with wooden staves,
And often they ate “varmints.”
Passing thence we proceeded
To where imprisoned spirits dwell,
—All anguished cries of theirs unheeded,—
That awful land called Hell.

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There I saw a monster great,
Like none I'd before beheld.
"Twas labeled Love, but beamed with hate
And 'gainst meeting it my soul rebelled.
"Twas the personification (in form of snake)
Of earthly monster known as Creed.
There was Creed upon a throne

In those infernal regions
And seemed, indeed, she quite at home
Commanding slaves by legions.
Worshiping there, that monster of slime,
Were myriads of priests from every clime,—
Priests who'd robbed poor widows gaily
Of their tear stained copper pennies.
Who, if perchance a penny fail them
They'd at once condemn the many
And tell them of that torrid region
Where they are wont to go—
Where satan, with his horrid legions
In fiery pits, their souls would stow.

On earth their coats were of many hues
Of costly silks and laces,
Diamond studded were their shoes
When appearing in public places.
But now, alas! the clothes they wore,
And must for ages yet,
Look like unto some hardware
Store's display advertisement.
Of a million pennies all tied together
That weigh a ton or two
Their coats are made and will last forever
Yet they pray to wear them through.

Tearful of eye and with tangled hair
Were myriads and myriads of women, there
Some sad eyed and tearful and moaning
Hearts enhungered, praying and yearning
While some of their sisters in woe

With hate and with anger aglow,
Their hearts as hard in hell's great gloom
As were they when they caused their doom.
While passing o'er the motley throng
Beheld I one I'd known for long—
Long had I known her in that former state
And wondered I much at this,—her fate.
Curious to learn, I sought information
Of the keeper of the book labeled "Damnation."
There was her name in ink of red
"Written with blood," so the keeper said.
The blood of a heart so grievous sore
It furnished that blood and could bleed no more.
Beneath the name of her, once revered,
Were written the charges 'gainst her preferred.
"A craven at heart, with a witching smile
She sent to the scaffold her lover—beguiled—
Beguiled by her into a dream of bliss—
The dream of one forbidden kiss.
The kiss enraptured, she freely gave
But, alas! false honor would she save.
Reckless of grief to her lover, or shame.
Falsely seeking a virtuous fame
Decried she him unto her lord
(Deceived and jealous country bard)
As ravisher of virtue and low and base
Too mean to dwell amid the race.
Inflamed with passion, devoid of reason,
Discerning not the woman's liaison
A mob of fools, all false of justice
Proclaiming each, himself quite lustless
Enthroned the place and round and round

The hapless lover with cords was bound.
With the scythe of death was he then smitten
A sacrifice to the law, "Unwritten."
Thus was she enthroned upon
A pinnacle of fame and won rēnown
With which, and a face of masked deceit,
She her sins did oft repeat."
Now—in hell,—her soul hypnotized
By satan, the prince and father of lies.
She's made to see with her distorted mind
Her lovers pass by in continuous line.
Hails she each with despairing wail
And wonders and wonders why now they fail
To comfort her there in hell's gloomy shade.
For one by one they approach and fade
Smiling a smile in derision and glee
Gloating, she thinks, o'er her misery.
Thus she's doomed for ages yet,
Her soul to hunger in hell's black jet,
Ever hoping, calling, crying
For comfort, for love, undying, undying.
A single love, by her once despised
Is that for which she cries and cries.

The sights so sad near rended my brain
And begged I of Freyja to return again
Unto the earth once so despised
But which now seemed near a paradise
Beside those depths of misery and gloom
Where evil man must meet his doom.
Freyja, however, tho generally kind
To lead me home, resolutely declined

Until—she explained—leading the way
O'er legions of souls all filled with dismay.
Haunted with visions of passion's regrets,
And the tormenting dreams that evil begets—
Until I beheld the torture in store
For such of mankind as are wont to ignore
The God-given counsels delivered to man
To aid in lengthening his life's short span.
Onward and onward we sailed through the murk
In which, it seemed, vile devils lurked,
Until, at length, we arrived at a glen
Set apart by Satan for vicious men—
Men born to lust—unconscionable brutes
Who pay for their crimes by eating crime's fruits.
Therein I saw a man of deceit
Known on earth to be a cheat
Yet so adept at hiding his liaisons
He was deemed a Beau Brummel by maids of all
fashion.
King of good fellows and winner of hearts
Cupid used him for sailing his darts.
Thus, in league, did the deceitful twain
Wound maidens by score so true was their aim,
Mocking with laughter at the havoc wrought,
The promises made and at once forgot.
He sailed his life's craft on a river of glee
And merrily maimed souls of sweet virginity.
But the misery on earth all caused by him
Is classed, in hell, as an unpardonable sin.
And the torture he suffers is much the same
As that endured by she of ill fame.
The murderer of a heart as true as gold,
Slain because her sins, he ne'er told.

In gay attire and with happy mien
Passing by in an endless train—
Or, so there are in his imagination
Distorted to further his condemnation,—
Damsels of beauty and rarest grace
Passing through this most hideous place—
Passing near him and he thinks, Alas!
As each appears she'll be the last.
In anguish then,—in agonized terror
He pleads for release from the awful horror
Of remaining alone with his darksome dreams
For the endless years and then endless aeons
To suffer alive tho seemingly dead
According to the sentence by Satan read.

Those souls who'd sinned in less degree
Were appointed to places of less misery.
Some suffered only imprisonment
Devoid alone of freedom's enjoyment.
Some of these groups were laughable sights
And, tho sad for them, did I laugh at their plight.
A group of rhymsters I pitied but smiled at
When beholding the torments they seemed to be
roiled at.
Satan knew well of their many delusions
And delighted in reading their foolish effusions.
And hear them chide each one the other
For the miserable jingles they had gotten together.
He'd also placed them in a barren expanse
Where nothing of beauty could their enjoyment
enhance
But nevertheless they'd write and they'd scribble

Praising the beauty about them with dribble.
They imagined themselves in flowery dells
Listening, enraptured, at the chiming of bells
From the steeples of churches of beauty and
grandeur
Where with some loved one it pleased them to
wander.
Or mayhap they'd dream of a rainbow near
Wheron was seated, from an unknown sphere,
Some idyllic creature, who'd beckon them nigh
And plead for their love—"without which they
would die."
Then would old Satan enjoy seeing their shame
By causing, a moment, their minds to be sane.
Some would then find themselves attempting to
climb
A non-extant rainbow, while others would find
Their loves and the churches and chiming church
bells
To be but delusions of rhymsters in hell.

"Twas the last place, by Freyja's decree
That she, in hell would show to me;
And as we sailed to worlds above
My mind, with vexing questions strove.
Freyja, however, discerning my strife
Concerning hell and death and life
Proceeded to raise the dark clouds of doubt
That encompassed my soul all round about
And told me of mysteries undreamed before
Of days to come and of days of yore.
The cause and result of the actions of men

Of nations and worlds through space without end.
She told me why the gods must rule
And plant, on earth, that ancient school
For which men long, to fill the void
Caused through worship of a single God.
And for this reason—yet not it alone—
The gods again seek to enthrone
Each himself above the earth
Thus to guard, e'en from birth
Each mortal. According to the hour and day
Will determine which of the gods shall sway
That mortal's footsteps throughout his life—
Whether a road of ease or a path of strife.
'Tis a law upon truth founded
Tho too seldom here expounded—
That when mortal's first breath's taken
And to forces near does waken
To harmony's laws does he respond
And in that instant his future's found."
From the land of misery and shame,
From the land of sin and pain,
We swiftly together sped
Through clouds of mist and rain
Upward and upward again
Swiftly to earth we fled.

The sight was a joy to the senses,
(Hell has its recompenses)
For now the earth seemed to me dearer.
I longed with a longing of love
As I gazed at it far, far above
To embrace it,—The earth—oncenothing drearier.

Those realms wherein the gods held sway too
frigid were
Hela's home too much sorrow held too much woe
and fear
No longer had I desire within such realms to
roam.
The giants too uncouthly were and caused too
great distress
For one to eat of their wretched food or share
alike their dress.
Happiness welled within me when viewing my
home sweet home.

In a forest of the northland—a forest dark as
night—
There is where we rested when at last we ceased
our flight.
Questioned I then of Freyja—What could her
object be.
Her answer was surprising—to me, an earthly
man.
Said she, “I'll introduce you to dear old Piper Pan
Who dwells within the forest yet whom mortals
fail to see.”

Straightway then she signaled to a moth of
brilliant hue
Daintily sipping honey from a flower damp with
dew,
And bade it with a gesture to bring at once its
mistress.

In just an instant more, to my great amaze,
A nymph stood there beside me,—my mind was
in a haze.

In vain for speech I struggled—my wits were in
distress.

'Twas the self same nymph I met before
I with Freyja, aloft did soar.

Her beauty all too glorious to be by pen described
And think I, none could paint it, tho for ages tried.
Not alone her beauty that filled my soul with
pleasure

Her grace and charm of manner were yet the
greater treasure.

Her eyes of soothing blackness, like rippling pools
at night

Were wells of power and mystery, and I'd tremble
with delight

When gazing in their depths and gain but just
a glimpse

Of wisdom hidden there and also mischief imps.

For a moment too I wondered anent the queer
sensations—

It seemed my flesh had clothed me and I felt my
heart's pulsations.

The nymph also seemed human rather than a
wraith

And Pan,—when he appeared—I swear by my
faith—

His hairy legs and cloven feet and likewise too
his horns

Were very like a creature's of earthly creature born.
And turning then to Freyja to seek an explanation
I found that she'd deserted (to my consternation)
The nymph however perceived
The thoughts that kept me grieved
And explained it was the nature
Of gods, like earthly creature,
(Or those of lesser birth)
To be as men of earth.
She also said I well might doubt
I, to be, my flesh without.

Very soon indeed, was I made to feel at ease
With dear old Pan the Piper and his my nymph
of the trees.
And immediately was taken to a dreamland place
of joy
Where first, was I made acquainted with little
Cupid boy.
Ever alert for mischief with bow and arrow too
E'er I was aware he'd pierced me through and
through.

The pain and the pleasure alternate so nearly
equalized
Bereft me of my senses and my speech was
paralyzed.
Then like a slave did I submit to this nymphian
sorceress
Who proved herself. like all her sex, a first class
torturess.

With a string of promise unto the arrow tied
Whose barb found lodgment and a safety place to
 hide
Within my heart—I'd vainly thought was ada-
 mant
Until the nymph attached the string, then—
 vanished my contentment!

From Cupid's bower she led me round and round
Lashed unto her fateful string as tho some poor
 hound.
Into a garden of fruits of various and many sizes
Wandered we together where I met with strange
 surprises.

When beside the nearest tree, with fruit mis-
 shapen, laden,
The nymph unloosed the string of promise and
 left me free as Adam.
I thought perchance the fruit might bring me
 better luck
And on tiptoes did I reach out, a single one to
 pluck.
I grasped it tightly in my hand and wondered—
 shall I eat it?
The nymph then nodded her consent and said,—
 “Perhaps you need it.”
I wondered at the mischief imps dancing in her
 eyes
And when I'd bitten into it imagine my surprise—
The peel as tough as rubber was filled with bitter
 gall

It strangled me near unto death—I thought I'd surely fall.

When at last I breathed again—of the tree I asked about

“Why, dear sir,” the nymph replied, “that's the tree of doubt.”

Just then from out the tree, uncannily, these words were spoken

“Thou art a very foolish fellow and by that very token

Unless thou cease

To spoil thy peace

And permit love's spell to be by doubting broken

Thou shalt the sport of fickle fortune be forever.

And tho thou seekest e'en for ages, shalt thou never

Know love's sweet joy

But instead a base alloy

A counterfeit of Satan's and sting unknown to Cupid's quiver.”

“Aye, O well!” I murmured in distress,

“Knew I not the road was thus,

Yet, however, would I discover

More anent the lot of lover

Thus to warn quixotic man

'Gainst the nymphs of Piper Pan.”

Ere the words had left my lips

I knew I'd spoken quite amiss

Her eyes, in haughty scorn, flashed to me a danger.

Quickly then sought I, to mollify her anger.
With speech most gentle forsooth
I sought, her temper, to soothe.
I told her 'twas but just a jest and nothing pleased
 me so
As did, it thus, to roam with her and prayed that
 we might go
And search for some adventure, to while away the
 time,
To this did she assent and it seemed to ease her
 mind.

She then took up the string of promise to which
 she kept me tied
Naught, could I, but follow her, no matter how I
 tried.
She led me then adown a walk (a narrow little
 lane)
Adorned one side with booths, some of which were
 plain
And some of rich design on either side were stand-
 ing.
One of these we entered, the sights were so com-
 manding
It almost made me dizzy to view such glorious
 splendor.
“And,” thought I, “Old Pan is rich, likewise a
 lavish spender.”
For here enclosed from every land and every
 clime
Were growing fruits and flowers from every tree
 and vine.

Clustered about in merry mood were many tiny
groups
Of nymphs of rarest beauty with escorts eating
fruits.
In the midst of this rare scene was a group of
dancers swaying
To those weird rhythmic strains of music that old
Piper Pan was playing.

The floor on which their feet were patting
Was a sheet of gold soft as matting,
Yet withal 'twas sufficiently firm
To glide upon, and made me yearn
To join the throng of dancers.

But the dance to me was entirely new
And lacked I grace sufficient too;
So stood aside
And watched them glide—
Conscious of their glances.

Straightway thence to a booth called Regret
The nymph led me, where, in a mirror, I met
The distorted features of my soul in remorse
For things longed for yet forever lost.

A sight indeed to create disgust
The sight of my soul writhing in dust
Ashamed to acknowledge (tho knowing well)
Its own sheer follies drove it to this hell.

A hell of torment, caused through fear,—
The fear to claim all it held dear
And grasp as was its God-given right,
Those things which make a day of night.

While viewing myself thus distorted
An awful voice from the mirror shouted,—
“Behold thou, mortal, the distress and despair
Bequeathed to one who did not dare—

Dared not grasp the best on earth
Which, by right, is his since birth
But yet was squandered and left to he,—
He who dares and wills that good must be.

See not thou the nymph who leads thee
Carest not that she were thine?
Why submit to this her tyranny
Aimlessly led as one quite blind?”

Berated I then myself a fool
To be led about with a string and dart
Quite as tho an inanimate tool
Yet,—, how could I free my stricken heart?

It ached with pain which yet was joy,
For fateful promise which led me on
Fused the pain to a pleasant alloy
And bade forebodings all, begone.

And so, fascinated and enraptured
I followed whithersoever she led me

Knowing quite well that my soul was captured
And I questioned myself,—“Would she wed me?”

While thusly engaged at surmising
And dreaming sweet dreams of the future
We stopped at a tree of the devil’s devising
Which required life’s blood for its nurture.

’Twas a tree most heavily laden
With a fruit of great beauty and splendor
And all who passed by it were bidden
By a voice most charming and tender

To partake of the fruit of dear Hope
So luscious and sweet to behold
But which to the taste is as rope—
Disappointing to both young and old.

Questioned I, then my fair captor
Sought I, to learn of her why,
Man must be an adapter
To circumstance until he die?

“Why do his dreams turn to ashes?
Why is his end but despair?
What is it crosses his wishes?
Why does Hope’s fruit seem so fair?”

Not by word did she answer me
But hand in hand we forward went
Unto a knarled and unkept tree
Labeled most vividly—Ill-content.

A voice then whispered from within its branches
“Partake of the fruit so dear to man
Unlovely indeed, yet the taste entrances
As does none other in the garden of Pan.”

’Twas a luscious fruit, tho yet unsightly
And as I ate, still more I craved
Guessed I then (I think quite rightly)
Discontent, is that which makes man most en-
slaved.

Enslaved is man thro discontent
And e’en tho hope is realized
Discontent cries, “Illusionment,”
And so all joys are mimimized.

The nymph then looked so wistfully—
I wondered why ’twas so
Until I found her telling me
’Twas time that I should go.

Said she, “”Tis seldom that we meet with mortals
here
And I long to have you with us and talk to you
and hear
About the world wherein you dwell throughout
your life’s span
For know you I am prisoner unto great Piper Pan.

“Not that he mistreats me that fain would I go
But often I grow weary with the pomp of things
you know.

And long to feel the thrill of mortal beings' warmth
Such as I have noted they all possess on earth.

"Ah! such is the glory of the happiness they know
(The burning kiss of passion 'twixt two lovers
true)

That I've often sought to leave my decorous
realms of grandeur

And become a mortal creature with e'en their
lack of polished manner.

"For here, tho gay," she continued pensively and
languid,

Her voice athrill with emotion until it slightly
trembled

"Our joys are too ethereal and lack the human
heart

So filled with joy and tenderness and Oh! Oh! the
warmth,—

"The warmth of burning pleasure such as I have
seen

"Twixt lovers true, hidden from their kind within
the forest sheen

But, Ah me!" exclaimed she, her voice full of
sadness,

"Pan refuses me permission and says my hopes
are madness."

Then I told her of my sorrow thus to see her mourn
Gently pleading that I aid her to leave her prison
home.

I begged her to flee with me and declared to her
my love
And boasted too, I feared not e'en the gods above.

Tho I'm sure my heart was quaking, boasting
thus to her

Whom I was sure knew the gods filled me with
fear.

However, I continued, and most passionately
pleaded

Telling her 'twas courage only that she needed.

Yet I feared her knowledge of mortal man was
meagre

Thus to praise them for their joys with such un-
bounded eager

So I told her of their sorrows—How they love and
hate

How their love is but seemly and that it, of which
they prate

Is but a cloak for hiding devious ways for gaining
In a manner lawful (because devoid of maiming)
Those things they covet mostly—that belong unto
a brother

Nor is there aught that's sacred 'twixt one another.

They prate of love for Christ, I said, and teach
that his plan

Is the first and only one for each and every man
Yet, because one prays at eve while his brother
prays at morn

Each unto the other says,—“Your worship is all wrong.”

And so they quarrel and bicker without the least
of reason

Damn they each the other in each and every
season.

“Tell me then, nymph,” with her I pleaded,
“Hast thou the haunts of men visited and heeded.

Or is it not that thy knowledge of man consists
Of what thou hast seen within the forest midst?”

My words had clouded her pretty face
A tiny frown on her brow made trace.

Puzzled and askance, a picture of woe—
Wounded her heart, as by mortal blow.

She answered me; doubting it seemed
The truth of my words,—as if I’d blasphemed.

“True,” she answered, “I’m quite unallowed
To visit those regions ’yond the forest’s shroud
And the words you’ve spoken are a cruel blow
To one whose learned to love mortals so.

“”Tis quite beyond all my conceiving
That mortal could be so deceiving
And why, I pray, can such misery be?
O, shame! O, shame! that such can be.”
She noted my surprise at this her confession
Of such slight knowledge of man her possession,

And hastened at once to me to explain
The cause of her ignorance for which she felt
shame.

“All nymphs,” she said, “of Piper Pan
Are held within bonds of the sacred plan
As, too, the gods; tho with less restraint
Yet, often they even voice a plaint.

“And so, sir mortal, ’tis as you’ve stated
My knowledge, by you, was no doubt overrated.
For all that I know of mortal man
I have learned it here in the realm of Pan.

“But O, how my being has thrilled with joy
(And, alas! my dreams are shattered now,)
What joy I’ve known when mortals would appear
Within the forest, my native sphere.

“For with accents sweet and voices athrill
They bespeak their joy at sight of a rill;
And chant they songs of each shrub and tree
Their happiness unbounded! their lives so free!

“How often have I stood a pace or two aside,
Watching happy lovers or perchance a groom and
bride—
Watching them embracing anon as they’d stroll
And truly did their actions at times seem very
droll.

“Then when they slumbered I have favored them
with dreams

Just to keep them quiet and thus by that means
Have I often lain beside them, nestled in their
arms

Just to feel the pleasure of my body growing
warm.

“For O!” she cried in anguish, “’tis that for which
I pine

The warmth of mortal blood, denied to all divine;
Our bodies frail and frigid,—transparent too to
men

Feel not the heat of passion nor yet the love they
ken.”

“Nymph, I interrupted, if thusly I can please
Henceforth, I shall sleep, ever beneath the trees.
But, pray tell me—Has it ever been my lot
To share with such a beauty my lonely cot?

“And if I’ve been so favored—tell me of my
dreams—

What the spell you wrought—tell me of the themes
Did I dream of sunny climes or northlands
And waken with a fever or chilled as Boreas’s
hands?”

“No tales I tell to flatter sir,” she answered me,
“But if perchance a nymph hath ever slept with
thee

Thou couldst not dream of tropic homes.
More like, ’twere frost disturbed thy bones.”

So thus at last I comprehended
How my pleasant rest was oft' times ended
Beneath the covers that should have kept me
 warm
When sleeping within the realms of Pan
Where fragrant breezes so near to calm
Seemed bent on causing some frigid harm.

However, was I not allowed much time
For reflecting on those ills of mine
Those wrongs I'd fancied to be Boreas's jesting
Which, now I knew must have been
Stolen warmth by nymphs of Pan
Stealings made while I was in slumber resting.

For yet again did the nymph remind me
That I should hasten to where Freyja'd find me.
Thus to continue my journey as planned
And ere I left (just to prove my love)
I sought to embrace my nymphian dove
And tried, a kiss, on her brow to emplant.

But she deftly escaped me and left me alone
Fled she in fear and I heard her moan,
As into the distance she vanished.
And I feared that I'd wronged her
Because of ill thots that thronged her
Because of the love I'd have lavished.

Standing there in contemplation
Of the strangeness of all creation,
And wondering why this nymph had fled;

Who might have known, and did, no doubt,
That I loved her only with a love devout.
A voice from a near by tree then said,

“Why ponder thus o'er facts so patent
If knowst thyself; 'tis most certain
That shouldst thou love thou wouldst not attempt
eluding
The object of thy desires
That causes thy passion's fires
To burn so brightly that all else is excluded.

But not like thee
Can the female see
And so acts contrariwise.
But thou hast lost
Both lover and host
And must seek elsewhere a paradise.”

In vain I plead for the nymph's return
The voice but laughed to hear me mourn,
And sadly, at last, turned I to flee.
Haunting regrets and memories' pains
Occupied now my miseried brain
And I longed for the void of an eternity.

The forest so dark, of giant trees
Swayed lazily about in the mildest breeze
And chanted a dismal dirge,
While forward I, with miseries pent,
Forlorn, forsaken, aimlessly went
Until reaching at last the forest's verge.

Where—joy of my heart! Sweet Freyja stood,
And pleasantly greeted me—Freyja, the good.
“Welcome sir!” she cried in tones so vibrant with
cheer

That my heart grew gay instanter and vanished
all sorrow and fear.

But when I attempted recounting to her my tales
of woe

She chided me for such gossip with just two words
—“I know”

And forbade me to tell of my troubles and in
truth made light of my sorrow

And told me to forget that at once for great was
the work for the morrow.

Said she, “Preparest thou therefore and soothe thy
mind with rest

A couch shall be brought forth at once,—one of
the very best.”

So saying, Freyja called in some miraculous
manner

A troop of minutest elves, each with a twig as
banner.

I watched them each and all deposit their mighty
portion

And when the task was finished was a bed as soft
as the ocean.

I noted then also, with a smile quite slyly mine,
She'd had the bed made distant—where the
nymphs could never find.

For nymphs cannot emerge without the forest's shade,
And I questioned of myself—"Could Freyja be afraid—
Afraid that I'd lose slumber through some nymphian rogue
Seeking warmth from the body of a mortal,
'neath a robe?"

'Neath a robe of silken fibres woven from the trees
By a myriad of little elfins who did it just to please
The great and lovely Freyja—goddess of them all;
Goddess of the great is Freyja, likewise goddess of the small.

I wondered too that a single bed was made—
Freyja smiled derision when those my thots she read.
But I less adept at divining the plans she had
Determined then to question her tho I knew I risked my head.

So I asked most meekly where she intended sleeping
Telling her 'twas irksome for elves to go a-seeking
After fall of night for leaves for other couches
Being too, too dangerous for them to carry torches.
And I proffered her my couch, *all*, if she required
"For," I concluded, "you also, must be tired."
She looked at me as tho dismayed that I should thus aspire

To share my couch with one so great—with station
so much higher.

Still, her happy sense of humor preserved me from
extinction

Tho a million elfins laughed with her and made
shame my great affliction.

“Mortal creature that thou art, I forgive thee
thy delusion

But Freyja goes to sleep alone where e'en the gods
tempt no intrusion.

“So sleep thou well nor let the nymphs disturb
thee,

Thou, a holier love shalt find, ere long, to curb
thee.”

Saying which, Freyja left me there alone
Vanishing. Whither? I have never known.

Puzzled my soul and wearied of bone
I timidly crept to my bed,—alone.

Too wearied indeed to think or to ponder
O'er events of the day so fraught with such wonder.

And doubting my senses and fearing to venture
Contemplating at all concerning the future,
Oblivion I sought in the arms of Morpheus
Beloved of the weary! Holy son of Somnus.

Tho arising at dawn, Freyja was soon at my side
Leading the winged steed which she stated I
should ride.

She bade me mount at once, saying, "We must hasten."

I murmured somewhat—discontent—because no food I'd eaten.

She scorned to heed my uncouth misbehavior,
Saying, it was ill to think of food save as just a
 savior,
And then, with but the minutest gesture
Bade my body to remain that thus it could not
 pester,—

Could not pester the flight for which she'd made
 arrangements
And off we flew together regardless of my argu-
 ments.
I regretted indeed the loss of my poor form of clay
But Freyja assured its return later in the day.

It took but a scant hour for she and I to fly
To where I first met her—within the desert dry.
And there I met again those gods in feathered
 form
That I had feared before, were intent on doing
 harm.

But whom I met with pleasure now, nor feared I
 they at all
For royally had they treated me, each of them and
 all.
They'd arranged the place for comfort since last
 I was there

A bower of beautiful trees,—vine covered every-
where.

A spring of crystal water gushed forth from the
hill

The fruit of some great power—someone's mighty
will,—

Arranged about were seats threaded with spun
gold,

Through a curtain of spraying water almost icy
cold,

The air was passing alway, which made it pure
and sweet,

A carpet of velvet grass grew now beneath our
feet;

A table, too, was there laden with delicious dishes,
Wine and fruit galore, to satisfy our wishes.

When the greetings were all over 'twixt Freyja
and her friends

They began cajoling her anent her mission's ends
Accused they her of seeking to win a mortal's love
(Being uncontent with all immortals from above.)

Some clamored for the privilege of being an
escort

Thus her plans of conquest to, in a measure,
thwart.

He who clamored most was no doubt a god of
splendor

Tho poorly could I judge, (he in guise of gander.)

Tho, yet his voice and manner of a most courageous kind

Proved a vigorous body as well as brilliant mind.
I could illy keep from smiling at the oddity of the sight

And at length I told to Freyja that I thought it wasn't right

For such gods as they to thus parade
Before one whose acquaintance each of them had made.

"Why, I'm surprised!" Freyja exclaimed to me,
"Lovest thou not the birds? Thinkest thou them unlovely?"

"Nay," I answered, "but according to a mortal's mind
A bird is lovely only when possessed of a bird's mind.
But rather 'tis incongruous and seems to them absurd
To hear the voice of humans spoken by a bird."

"'Tis ill that thou shouldst criticise," she gently cautioned me,
"But," she then continued, "If our dress offend thee—
Just to make you happy and contented in your mind
The gods shall appear to thee as beings of your kind."

So, behold! When I looked again
The gods appeared as supermen
And Freyja too became a girl
Like unto those who fill and fool the world.

I, too, received my form of clay—
How it arrived I cannot say
When all were bidden to sit at the table
To relieve it of its burden as much as we were able.

While round the bounteous board we sat and each
with the other jested
The gods the merrier grew, the longer that they
feasted.
For an hour or more in jovial mood they gossiped,
While I wondered about their dignity—fearing
they had lost it.

At length however they changed their mood and
began to question me,
And also tell about their plans, and I listened to
all attentively.
Thor spoke first, and tho in kindly tone, I was
indeed affrighted
Because of the weirdness of his voice—this god
so very mighty.

Said he, “Sir Mortal, what is thine choice? Who
wilt thou in future serve,
This god whom none hath seen nor wilt commun-
ion have

With mortals who dwell on earth, nor wilt their
pleadings heed
Nor seems will serve another than he who's born
to greed?

"This God whom christians claim, 'The just
and only one,'
Who yet permits on earth, the rankest injustice
done,—
I, who am master of intrigues and wars
And delight, in common with my companion
Mars

"To behold the heroism of mortals upon a
battlefield
Would yet, to the cry of orphans some pity yield.
Have I not beheld, within the recent past
Widows and orphans in millions for days not
break their fast.

To me, this God of whom christians prate
Appears, not a God of love but rather one of hate,
One who jeers at sorrows and finds pleasure in
the pain
Of all who are not of kingly birth; and delights in
the heaps of slain.

When we were overthrown by the power of the
goodly Christ
Took we our punishment unmurmuringly: 'Twas
the fault of a great one's vice.

One whose power grew so great here upon this earth
That mortals still do worship him—even from their birth.

I speak of he called Mammon, the youngest god of all
Who sits alone at table in yonder end of hall.
Who sits alone at table nor joins us in our feasts
Lest he lose a drop of wine or a morsel of his meats.

We seek now to dethrone him and leave him on earth to dwell
For such ungainly creatures are fit for but earth or hell.
Therefore, ere thou leavest, to judge him thou art asked,
After the feast the trial shall be, altho 'twere an irksome task.

Thereby, ye see, sir mortal, how just we shall be
The rewards of every mortal, likewise his destiny
Shall be granted according to the virtues that are his or hers
Therefore, again I ask, sir mortal, who wilt thou in future serve?"

"Truly, Thor," I answered, "the sights I've seen of late
Together with the kindness that you've shown
Makes me long very much to partake
Of the bounties of such a throne.

But then 'twere a task to a mortal most severe
To break allegiance and all ties sever
From that God he's been taught to fear
And for whom the claim is made there is none
other.

And yet thy accusations seem to me most just
For well I know of the miseries endured through-
out this life
But we've been promised compensation when
our bones are turned to dust
And the compensation greatest to him of greatest
strife."

"So indeed!" the great Thor replied, "to some
extent 'tis true
But compensation, only will be given unto him
to whom it's due
To him who is unschooled in the workings of the
soul
Will at last find compensation is not paid in gold.

"And the struggle must continue and he whose
soul's so sordid
That it cannot harmony's laws comprehend
Will find himself unable, when the soul is free to
soar,
To keep his soul intact and 'twill be lost forever-
more.

"Like unto the dumb beasts his soul will separ-
ate—

Divide into atoms and reach the primal state—
And he who'll be rewarded and rewarded quite
the most
Will be the one whose soul is farthest 'bove the
bestial hosts."

"Thy words are quite confounding," at length I
answered Thor,
"The Christ we love taught to us very much the
same.
And it's strange to me to hear such words from
thou, the god of war,
And I'm much inclined to follow thee till at least
I find it vain."

A resounding cheer rang out while high their
glasses held,
The gods and goddesses each (their faces shone
delight)
Greeted me their first convert, while heavenly
music knelled
"Death to Christianity,—mankind's most wretch-
ed night."

"Hark! ye gods!" I then explained, intonating
ridicule,
We mortals think,—and, too, with the best of
reason
That we've progressed far more since we've
followed Christ's good rule.
To deny it were but folly and to truth attempted
treason.

And surely the world's less wretched than 'twas
in your day
And the night of which your elfins sing and chant
Is less wretched, is it not, than when ye held sway?
Lest I've been mistaught your statements are
but cant."

"Nay," the gods then answered me, "quite true
that misery thrived,
But the reason's not the same today as when we
lived.
Wretchedness then was born through fear of
tyrants' might
And man would not so fear today except they're
taught 'tis right.

"Wretchedness today is caused alone through
fear,
They're taught 'tis wrong to seek their own—all,
all that's dear.
Hypocrites, who are your rulers, threaten with
the wrath
Of that God they know, is but a fear inspiring
myth.

"And so men languish in chains of shame,
Chains of superstition, the chains of poverty and
ill fame.
Once remove their cause for fear—so vile,
And no longer will they, to masters be servile.

“And that’s the work for thee, according to our plan,
Eradicate the curse of fear from all your fellow-man.
Teach them to praise the gods of poesy who now will be supreme.
We gods reward the valiant and make their lives serene.

“Go thou first and build a shrine to the immortal thou lovest most,
Build it not of pretentious size to awe the vulgar hosts.
Use not thou, rare stones but rather vines and trees,
Build thou it to suit thine self, ’twill the gods most please.

“Seek ye then our aid and all the gods shall foster All thy plans and cause that they mature. Thou shalt truly prosper.
When your disciples are numbered by scores, as truly they shall be—
Permit them each to choose his own divinity.”

Our attention was now directed to Mammon, where at his lonely feast
(A sorry aspect he, uncouth in truth, in manner,) He smacked his lips in satisfaction much as might a beast
And swept aside his dishes all, creating a noisy clatter.

With frowning brow and eyes downcast,
No word of greeting for his friends at board
The length of the room he shuffled past,
Apparently dreaming of his gold mad hordes.

But ere he traversed the length again—
Amidst a tense and ominous silence,—
Thor arose and called his name
And begged the pleasure of an audience.

All were then to seats, in a semi-circle arranged,
Led forth to try a god whose company no longer
was desired
Because of his selfish manner he had made him-
self estranged;
In the murk of greed and conquest his sordid self
was mired.

I, by a god, was ushered unto the judge's seat,
While Mammon sat quite near,—ill humor was
his mien—
No jurors there nor witnesses as with gods 'twas
meet
Since none would stoop to an untruth and thus
his honor stain.

Then Thor at once began the sins of Mammon to
state,
He told of all his grievous faults, that were to
them at least,
So great they could no longer his presence tolerate
And henceforth he to them could be but an out-
cast.

Said he, "We have with us a mortal,—one of the unbribed—

One who's not your victim and belongs not to your tribe.

This mortal shall pronounce your sentence and relieve the gods of shame

Should the sentence pronounced upon thee befit not thy fame.

"God Mammon," he continued, "the charge that's most against thee

Is the crime we gods call greatest. Thou art charged with hypocrisy,

By wiles that are deceitful hast thou brought shame to man

No longer seek they only to follow the sacred plan.

"Their souls are seared with selfishness, a trait that thou hast taught

Themselves and thou occupy now practically all of their thoughts

These things we gods have noted and beside an equal crime

Thou hast sought to exclude their worship from every shrine but thine.

"Therefore your presence, Mammon, in our realm is no longer wished

Thou shalt henceforth be banished forever from our midst.

But, yet art thou given, before this mortal judge
A chance to plead thy cause, lest his ruling be unjust."

Astonished to stupefaction for a moment Mammon sat—
Contortions of his face bespeak the mingled pains.
Then slowly to his feet arose, discarding a silken
wrap,
Raised his head in hauteur, his lips curled in disdain.

His voice so full of scorn—in every tone he jeered
At this that was to him a punishment illy meted.
While I, appointed judge, for my welfare really
feared
Lest perchance he'd think himself, by me illy
treated.

Yet my fears were groundless for he heeded me
as a nonentity,
He spoke alone to his former friends who now at
last were foes.
Said he, “Ye gods, I’m flattered by this your
enmity.
It indeed, your fear of me, more than aught else
shows.

“My power, indeed, hath grown so great
That jealousies now consume thee,
And to check that power thou art too late
For ’twill, for ages, rule without me.

“Thou mayest slay me if you will
But I defy ye all; gods and men and even fate.

My power shall rule all mankind still,
My spirit will thrive e'en 'gainst thy hate.

“During all the centuries of our confinement,
With a promise of untold wealth,
Hath a myriad of elves, in my employment,
Been teaching in honor and in stealth.

“The glories of Mammon the king,
King of the gods! King o'er the hearts of men,
All to the altar of Mammon bring
Both honored and steeped in sin.

“Their hearts of evil, hearts of good,
Tears of sorrow and tears of shame,
Their very souls are Mammon's brood
Forever and ever 'twill be the same.

“Tho despised am I by honored friends,
And alone must seek my comrades
'Mongst evil elves where all beauty ends
Tho I sink now to the slime of things most sordid

“Yet will I, in triumph and with glee,
Perceive the tribute paid for ages yet to come—
All honor from mankind will still be paid to me
Though clouds of shame, henceforth, at this my
fatal doom.

“Keep me bowed with grief and in solitude to
mourn—

To mourn the passing pleasures of the fellowship
of my kind
Yet, tho' of all the glory of life with thee I'm shorn
There'll be sweet revenge in knowing I am loved
best by mankind."

The speech of Mammon ended 'twas meet that
I should speak
And let be known to him the future he must seek.
Where his future days be spent, whither he should
roam—
Hastily I concluded that the earth should be his
home.

So I said, "God Mammon, because of your love
of self
And the curse you've wrought on man (their
cursed love of pelf)
I'd sentence you to dwell in the darkest depths of
hades
Were I not most fearful lest ye teach those rene-
gades,—

Those renegades of Satan's—hapless sons of
pride—
The cunning of your craft and cause them to im-
bibe
Of the cup that's brought to mortals shame
And curse them, too, with the loathing lust for
gain.

Therefore, god Mammon, a more bitter penance
I view

One that will more greatly goad the heart of you.
No other realm shall be given unto thee for con-
quest,
Your evil work must cease, henceforth shalt thou
rest.

Thou shalt henceforth in idleness forever roam
the earth

Your might and power impotent as the infant at
its birth.

And tho your spirit, as boastfully you contend,
May yet taint humankind for time without an
end.

Yet shall ye suffer as your victims (unsated ever
and ever)

Thirsting for the power from which, I now, thee
sever.

So, now, farewell, god Mammon,—I speak for
your friends as well,

A life on earth no doubt you'll find more irksome
than one in hell.”

When the gods heard me pronounce Mammon's
doom

And he, the champion dispenser of gloom,
Had taken an early departure,

A sigh of relief was echoed about

And a cheer of praise for me rang out
At choosing for him such fortune.

Then hastened each from his tribune seat
To gaze upon Mammon's forlorn retreat,
Wending his way o'er the desert wastes.
And they felt remorse at their kindred's fall
For, tho he loved them not at all,
Their hearts were saddened by his loss of place.

Their hearts were saddened by this the sight
Of a god so great in power and might
Reduced to the plane of a mortal soul—
No longer sped he as a bird in flight
Carried by the force of his wondrous might—
But wearily plodded to reach a goal.

At length we noted that the day fast waned
And much indeed there yet remained

Of converse concerning the future
And hastened we again to the banquet board
Where unseen elves the rare wine poured
For each goddess and her suitor.

Soon again supreme joy reigned,
The glasses tinkled merrily.
Glorious ladies and gods unaged.
Spoke their minds unwarily.

Freyja, the fair
Her sunlit hair
Glistening as burnished gold,
Spoke with candor

And told of the grandeur
Of the gods in the days of old.
And filled with glee
She confided to me
Their happiness in store again
When communion with men
Was restored again
And unchallenged they should reign.

Yet she chilled my soul
When at length she told
Of the changes in store for women,
Declaring that they
In the future may
Implace themselves rulers of men.

She told me then
That while I was with Pan
She hastened away to read women's hearts
That she might know
Whether of weal or woe
In the future to them she'd impart.

And declared then with fervor
That she'd confer greater favor
Than ever they'd known of before—
She'd grant them more beauty
And considered it her duty
To aid them in winning world power.

“And tho I must grieve
At what I perceive

In store for them in the great distance
"T'were folly for me
To attempt to decree
That their ambition be shorn of persistence.

"But, enough! Be it said
That ere thou art dead
Thou shalt see woman rule
Tho they bring disaster
By being thy country's master.
Experience alone will be their school.

"For years by the score
Shall they maintain their power
And with ruthlessness born of vanity
Scorn to be considerate—
Until vengeance, born of hate,
Will drive man from his inanity.

"And the shackles of patience
And chains of submission
By a storm of rebellion he'll break—
He'll no longer be gracious
Nor filled with compassion
For she who should be his mate.

"But by brutish means
To gain selfish ends
Once more he'll be lord over women
Tho acknowledged as fiends
By foes and by friends—
Not shame shall detract from their venom.

“And women again shall be
Dominated by force of strength
(Save those too proud to submit)
And they shall be made to flee
To a mateless commonwealth
And there from the world exit—

“Exit from the world alone,
Martyrs to ideals too great
For the myriads of selfish men,
Heart-broken with wishes for home
Hungering to the last for the mate
Without which they’d as well not have been.

“Then will man retrograde
Declaring it a useless task
To climb ever upward to meet—
Not the cherished dreams of Arcade,
Not the surcease they now ask,—
But ever and ever defeat.

“And women shall bear the blame
And burdens will be heaped upon them
The same as in ages past.
Their souls will be seared with shame
At the contempt shown them by men
And their beauty and souls will wither before
that burning blast.”

Such words did Freyja say
Ere she said to me farewell.
And I listened and believed it all
For pride and scorn is a woman’s way
Whenever they fare too well
And thus have they caused great nations’ fall.

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